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ABSTRACT

Previous research has shown that employed men are generally healthier than employed women, due in part to the dual role of women as workers and homemakers. To examine this explanation, the impact of four types of daily hassles (minor stressful events) was compared on two adaptational outcomes, psychological symptoms and health, for working men and women. As part of a larger study, the daily hassles of 69 employed adults were assessed for 9 months. Non-overlapping subscales of the Hassles Scale were generated, i.e., practical, family, economic, and work. Quite different patterns emerged for men and women. Employed women were more affected by practical and family hassles, but less vulnerable to economic and work hassles than men, even though men and women reported the same number of family, economic, and work hassles. Results highlight the value of assessing different kinds of daily hassles in the study of stress. The Hassles and Uplifts Subscales for the four areas studied are included. (JAC)

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Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the American Psychological Association, Washington, DC, August 23-27, 1982.

Daily Hassles as Mediators of Employment/Gender Differences in Adaptational Outcomes*

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Research on gender differences in health and other adaptational outcomes has shown that employed men are generally healthier than employed women. This pattern has been attributed to the toll taken on working women by their dual roles as workers and homemakers. To examine this explanation more closely, the current study compares the impact of four types of daily hassles (minor stressful events) on two adaptational outcomes, psychological symptoms and health, as well as other stress-related criteria, for working women and men. The expectation was that employed women would be more vulnerable than employed men to practical and family hassles.

As part of a larger, year-long study, the daily hassles of 69 (28 women) employed, white, middle-aged (45 - 64), mostly Protestant participants of adequate income and at least 9th grade education were assessed once a month for 9 consecutive months (Kanner, et al, 1981). The 9 monthly Hassles Scale (a 117-item checklist for the previous month's hassles) scores were then averaged. Other measures included the Hopkins Symptom Checklist (HSCL, given months 2 and 10 of study), Health Status Questionnaire (given in mail-out one month prior to study, month 10), major life events (mail-out, month 10), Bradburn Affect Scales (each of first 9 months, scores averaged) and Jenkins Activity Survey (Type A behavior, month 3). Four non-overlapping Subscales of the Hassles Scale were generated by 3 judges: Practical, Family, Economic, and Work (Kanner, 1981).

Quite different patterns emerged for women and men. For employed women, practical hassles showed strong relationships to psychological symptoms (r's = .75, .75, p's $< .001$), major life events ($r = .54$, $p < .01$), negative affect ($r = .51$, $p < .01$) and Type A behavior ($r = .43$, $p < .05$). Yet for employed men, only the first administration of the HSCL showed a significant relationship to practical hassles ($r = .36$, $p < .05$). A similar pattern occurred for family hassles. In sharp contrast, however, substantial relationships appeared for working men between economic hassles and psychological symptoms (r's = .58, $p < .001$; .33, $p < .05$), life events ($r = .58$, $p < .001$), negative affect ($r = .48$, $p < .01$) and good health ($r = -.37$, $p < .05$, for second administration of Health Status Questionnaire). For working women, none of these relationships reached significance. A similar pattern emerged for work hassles. Working women reported more practical hassles than working men (two tailed $t = 2.47$, $p < .05$) and were less healthy (5.20 vs. 4.46, $t = 2.20$, $p < .05$; 5.14 vs. 4.43, $t = 2.18$, $p < .05$), but no other mean-level gender differences appeared on any of the measures used.

Not only were employed women more affected by practical and family hassles, as expected, but they were less vulnerable to economic and work hassles than were employed men. This pattern emerged even though women and men reported the same number of family, economic and work hassles. Perhaps these middle-aged women had less challenging and rewarding jobs, and were generally less identified with work, than the working men. Their greater vulnerability to practical and family hassles is consistent with the "dual role" hypothesis. These results also highlight the value of assessing different kinds of daily hassles in the study of stress.

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Kanner, A.D. Specificity in the impact of daily hassles and uplifts on adaptational outcomes: An analysis of gender, employment status, and type A behavior. Doctoral dissertation, Psychology Department, University of California, Berkeley, 1981

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HASSLES AND UPLIFTS PRACTICAL SUBSCALES

Hassles

1. Misplacing or losing things (1)*
2. Cutting down on electricity (15)
3. Care for pet (22)
4. Planning meals (23)
5. Home maintenance (inside) (29)
6. Having to wait (40)
7. Silly practical mistakes (46)
8. Preparing meals (59)
9. Wasting time (60)
10. Auto maintenance (61)
11. Filling out forms (62)
12. Too many things to do (79)
13. Trouble with writing, reading, or spelling abilities (85)
14. Trouble with arithmetic skills (88)
15. Legal problems (90)
16. Television (93)
17. Transportation problems (105)
18. Shopping (108)
19. Not enough time for entertainment and recreation (111)
20. Yardwork or outside home maintenance (112)

*Item number as it appears in full Hassles or Uplifts Scale is in parentheses.

HASSLES AND UPLIFTS PRACTICAL SUBSCALES

Uplifts

1. Practicing your hobby (2)*
2. Finding something personal lost (12)
3. Meeting your responsibilities (24)
4. Having enough time to do what you want (33)
5. Cooking (40)
6. Using drugs or alcohol (42)
7. Eating (45)
8. Having the "right" amount of things to do (46)
9. Buying things for the house (54)
10. Reading (55)
11. Shopping (56)
12. Smoking (57)
13. Buying clothes (58)
14. Doing yardwork or outside housework (64)
15. Entertainment (movies, concerts, T.V., etc.) (77)
16. Recreation (sports, games, hiking, etc.) (80)
17. Free time (89)
18. Music (95)
19. Pets (103)
20. Car working/running well (104)
21. Praying (114)
22. Meditating (115)
23. Being alone (121)
24. Fixing/repairing something (besides at your job) (130)
25. Making something (besides at your job) (131)

*Item number as it appears in full Hassles or Uplifts Scale is in parentheses.

HASSLES AND UPLIFTS FAMILY SUBSCALES

Hassles

1. Health of a family member (7)*
2. Decisions about having children (20)
3. Sexual problems other than those resulting from physical problems (55)
4. Friends or relatives too far away (58)

Scale 5. Problems with aging parents (73)

6. Problems with your children (74)
7. Problems with your lover (76)
8. Overloaded with family responsibilities (78)
9. Problems with divorce or separation (87)
10. Not enough time for family (104)

Uplifts

1. Relating well with your spouse or lover (18)
2. Meeting family responsibilities (21)
3. Sex (31)
4. Spending time with family (51)
5. Becoming pregnant or contributing thereto (61)
6. Health of a family member improving (66)
7. Deciding to have children (101)
8. Children's accomplishments (106)
9. Getting love (109)
10. Giving love (119)

*Item number as it appears in full Hassles or Uplifts Scale is in parentheses.

HASSLES AND UPLIFTS ECONOMIC SUBSCALES

Hassles

1. Not enough money for clothing (8)*
2. Not enough money for housing (9)
3. Concerns about owing money (10)
4. Concerns about getting credit (11)
5. Concerns about getting money for emergencies (12)
6. Someone owes your money (13)
7. Financial responsibilities for someone who doesn't live with you (14)
8. Not enough money for basic necessities (35)
9. Not enough money for food (36)
10. Not enough money for health care (43)
11. Financial security (45)
12. Financing children's education (64)
13. Rising prices of common goods (70)
14. Not enough money for transportation (106)
15. Not enough money for entertainment and recreation (107)
16. Property, investments, and taxes (110)

Uplifts

1. Saving money (4)
2. Successful financial dealings (9)
3. Financially supporting someone who doesn't live with you (30)
4. Having enough money for health care (62)
5. Having enough money for transportation (65)
6. Having enough money for entertainment and recreation (76)
7. Paying off debts (81)
8. Having good credit (94)
9. Getting unexpected money (96)

*Item number as it appears in full Hassles or Uplifts Scale is in parentheses.

HASSLES AND UPLIFTS WORK SUBSCALES

Hassles

1. Problems getting along with fellow workers (27)*
2. Customers or clients give you a hard time (28)
3. Concerns about job security (30)
4. Don't like current work difficulties (33)
5. Problems with employees (65)
6. Problems on job due to being a woman or man (66)
7. Unchallenging work (80)
8. Job dissatisfactions (83)
9. Worries about decision to change jobs (84)
10. Hassles from boss or supervisor (102)

Uplifts

1. Liking fellow workers (6)
2. Using skills well at work (82)
3. Having good ideas at work (86)
4. Job satisfying despite discrimination due to sex (88)
5. Liking work duties (93)
6. Changing job (97)
7. Things going well with employers (107)
8. Boss pleased with your work (120)
9. Working well with fellow workers (123)
10. Knowing your job is secure (124)

*Item number as it appears in full Hassles or Uplifts Scale is in parentheses.